

AUSTRIAN INFORMATION

PUBLISHED BY THE

AUSTRIAN INFORMATION SERVICE

AUG 2

31 EAST 69th STREET • NEW YORK 21, N.Y. • TELEPHONE: LEHIGH 5-4120

VOL. VII, NO. 13

SPECIAL ISSUE

July 20, 1954

AUSTRIA SUFFERS GREATEST FLOOD-DISASTER IN HER HISTORY

COMMITTEES IN WASHINGTON, D.C. AND NEW YORK SPONSOR FLOOD RELIEF DRIVE

C.A.R.E. SPONSORS NATIONWIDE RELIEF COMMITTEE IN WASHINGTON, D.C. In Washington, D.C., a nationwide committee for relief and rehabilitation of the flooded areas in Austria is in the process of formation. Senator Robert C. Hendrickson, former commander of U.S. Forces in Linz, has accepted the chairmanship of this committee. C.A.R.E. has offered the services of its field offices throughout the country to assist the committee. The Austrian Government has set up a council in Vienna which will decide how the money will be used and the funds raised will be accounted for by C.A.R.E. As Senator Hendrickson says: "Even though the fury of the flood has spent itself, the misery left in its wake is enormous. Homes will have to be rebuilt, land will have to be reclaimed and, above all — people will have to be clothed and fed."

An appeal is made to send contributions to the C.A.R.E. Committee for Austrian Flood Relief and Rehabilitation, 1013 Dupont Circle Building, Washington, D.C.

LATEST REPORT FROM VIENNA. The Austrian Government has issued the following official survey of the damage caused thus far by the floods in the two provinces of Upper and Lower Austria:

- 28,000 houses flooded
- 25,000 homeless
- 7,000 houses evacuated
- 200 houses destroyed
- 100,000 hectares (247,000 acres) of farmland flooded and crops destroyed
- 200 bridges destroyed
- 20 railway lines interrupted
- 200 industrial plants, including the Linz Nitrogen Works, stop production.

Main tourist centers are not affected.

RELIEF COMMITTEE IN NEW YORK IS SUPPORTED BY AMERICAN RED CROSS. To help flood-stricken Austria, an Austrian Flood Relief Committee has been formed in New York. The Committee has appealed to the generosity of the American people for help. The American Red Cross has agreed to sponsor this drive and to forward all funds without any deductions to the Austrian Red Cross. All contributions are tax-deductible. Checks or money orders should be made out to "American Red Cross" and mailed to "Austrian Flood Relief Committee," 165 West 46th Street, Room 1109, New York 36, N.Y. Telephone (PLaza 7-0117). Receipts will be made out by the American Red Cross for income tax deduction.

SURVEY OF DISASTER DAMAGES. The current catastrophic floods in Austria are the worst in her history. Heavy rainfalls which lasted for weeks have transformed her rivers — especially the Danube, the Inn, the Salzach, the Traun, the Traisen, the Enns, the Krems and the Ybbs — into torrents and then into lakes which have flooded extensive areas. Hundreds of cities and villages have submerged in part or completely. Tens of thousands of persons were saved only at the last moment after waiting for days on the roofs of their houses. Their homes, property, businesses, fields, crops and cattle have mostly been destroyed. Hundreds of factories have also been flooded. Some 15,000 members of the Austrian gendarmerie, police force, fire departments and the Red Cross have been working night and day for two weeks saving human lives, rebuilding broken dams and protecting threatened lives and property. The rescue activities have received heroic support from troops of the U.S. and Soviet armies, sometimes working side by side. Helicopters are searching flooded areas for stranded persons. The Austrian Government has declared a state of emergency in the disaster areas and called upon the Austrian people as well as the entire world to give assistance to the flood victims in their moment of urgent need.

TOURIST BUSINESS NOT AFFECTED BY FLOOD. The Austrian Tourist Promotion Office reports that the international tourist centers in Austria have not been affected by the flood. Even Salzburg was able to call off the emergency alarm after a few days. Only a few houses on the

UPPER AUSTRIA: 15,000 PERSONS EVACUATED, PROVINCIAL CAPITAL UNDER WATER, CROPS DESTROYED. Upper Austria, where the flood has already passed its high point, is the first province to make a preliminary report on the dam-

(Continued on page 2, column 2)

(Continued on page 2, column 1)

banks of the Salzach were reached by the water. Train service as well as road and air connections to Austrian tourist centers are functioning smoothly.

EMERGENCY CREWS KEEP TRANSPORTATION AND FOOD SUPPLY LINES OPEN. Austrian rescue groups, road construction units, emergency railway crews, fire departments, the police and the gendarmerie are engaged in emergency activity to keep transportation lines in the flood areas open. The distribution of food supplies has not been interrupted. International train traffic to and from Vienna was re-routed over various lines and is now subject to only slight delays. The trains are being routed temporarily from Vienna over the Semmering to Bruck-an-der-Mur, from where they proceed to Salzburg. By means of detours, road traffic to the West is also being maintained. Rigorous measures have been taken in the flooded areas to forestall any possible price increases. Workers in factories which have been forced to halt production are receiving full unemployment compensation.

CHANCELLOR AND MINISTER OF INTERIOR VISIT FLOOD AREA. Austrian Chancellor Julius Raab and Minister of the Interior Oskar Helmer proceeded immediately to the flood areas to survey the extent of the damage first hand. Both the Chancellor and the Minister visited flooded and isolated areas in small boats, inspected the emergency relief crews and brought words of encouragement to the distressed inhabitants.

AUSTRIAN INFORMATION

PUBLISHED BY THE

AUSTRIAN INFORMATION SERVICE

31 EAST 69th STREET • NEW YORK 21, N.Y. • TELEPHONE LEHIGH 5-4120

age inflicted. According to a report in the "Wiener Zeitung," some 50,000 hectares (123,500 acres) of cultivated land have been flooded and their crops completely destroyed; 5,000 houses were evacuated with the assistance of the public authorities and U.S. occupation troops; some 10,000 houses were evacuated by their own inhabitants; 15,000 persons are homeless and a much greater number took refuge on the roofs and in the upper stories of their houses; traffic on 200 highways, including main arteries, was disrupted; 130 bridges were destroyed; 152 industrial plants, some of them of major importance, were forced to interrupt production: e.g. the Steyrermuehl paper plant, which suffered a two-million schilling loss in production in just two days, and the Linz Nitrogen Works. Large sections of Linz, the capital of Upper Austria with a population of 185,000 are under water.

FLOOD REACHES HIGH POINT IN LOWER AUSTRIA. Proceeding from Upper Austria, the high waters of the Danube flood were rolling over the largely flat terrain of Lower Austria. The communities of Ybbs, Pöchlarn, Melk, Tulln, Krems, Aspam, Kronau, Preuwitz, St. Johann, Wallsee, Altenwoerth, Maria Ponsee, Stephanshart, Ardagger, Strengberg, Luberegg, Schall, Emmersdorf, Theiss, Klosterneuburg, Korneuburg, Kahlenbergerdorf and many other are partly or entirely under water. In Langen-Lebarn, where a U.S. airfield is located, American G.I.s have been working shoulder to shoulder with Soviet soldiers for several days in an effort to save both the community and the airfield. 10,000 persons have already been made homeless.

The spirit of helpfulness among the people exceeds all measure. Thousands of families are taking in children from the flood-stricken areas. The Provincial Government of Lower Austria has decided to evacuate all children from the flood areas in order that they should not be exposed to the possible danger of epidemics.

FLOOD REACHES VIENNA. Austria's capital city of Vienna was also affected by the flood. The Danube flooded its banks and inundated a number of suburbs, including Klosterneuburg. Thanks, however, to its excellent protective installations, the city itself was not affected. Only one section of the harbor and sections of road very close to the Danube were under water. Working conditions in the city, as well as the food supply and tourist activity, are all completely normal.

AUSTRIAN NATIONAL EMERGENCY AID COMMITTEE FORMED. At a meeting of the Austrian Cabinet to discuss the flood catastrophe, Chancellor Julius Raab paid highest tribute to the discipline shown by the Austrian people and to the unselfish efforts of the rescue groups. The Government decided to set up an "Austrian National Committee for Disaster Relief" under the chairmanship of the Chancellor and including as members the competent cabinet ministers and representatives of the provincial governments as well as of the cities and communities in the stricken area. Undersecretaries Ferdinand Graf and Bruno Kreisky were appointed to draw up the organizational directives for this relief committee.

